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INSIDE



RP Blast

A bomb exploded in a market packed with Christmas shoppers Sunday, killing at least 15 people, injuring 58 others and shattering a monthslong lull in terror attacks in the volatile southern Philippines, where Muslim and communist rebels are active.

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Literary War

The National Endowment for the Arts earlier this year asked U.S. soldiers and their families to write down what they saw, heard and felt during the Iraq war for a program called "Operation Homecoming." The reflections compiled to date offer a poignant glimpse into soldiers' lives and how they are affected by war.

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Stateless issue hits snag

Feds indicate bringing the matter to US High Court

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The CNMI government may have to hold off with its plan to hold a U.S. citizenship swearing-in ceremony for the so-called "stateless" persons after the federal government indicated that it

might appeal the matter before the U.S. Supreme Court.

According to assistant attorney general James Livingstone, he received information that the U.S. Attorney's Office has filed with the Supreme Court a request for an extension of time within which to file an appeal.

The 90-day deadline for the U.S. State

Department to appeal an adverse ruling by the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit falls on Dec. 16, Thursday.

The *Saipan Tribune* contacted yesterday the U.S. Attorney's Office on Guam, particularly lawyer Mikel Schwab, to elaborate on the Supreme Court filing, but the call has yet to be returned as of press time.

The U.S. Department of Justice, through the USAO, represents the State Department in opposing the clamor for citizenship by the stateless group, which numbers about 300 individuals. Stateless persons are those born in the Northern Marianas between Jan. 1, 1974 and Nov. 4, 1986—the intervening period between

See **STATELESS** on Page 12



AGNES E. DONATO

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Saipan International Airport employees walk by breathing apparatuses used for aircraft rescue and firefighting. On the background is the multi-million dollar facility, where CNMI and Palau firefighters trained last week in preparation for aircraft disaster.

Court stops release of \$3.45M to Malite estate

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The Superior Court has issued a temporary restraining order blocking the release of some \$3.45 million in land compensation claims by the Malite estate.

Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama issued the TRO late Thursday afternoon last week. The TRO indicated that it would be effective for 10 days, "unless with that time it is extended for good cause shown."

Attorney general Pamela Brown said

See **COURT** on Page 12

Atalig statements trouble Brown

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Attorney general Pamela Brown expressed alarm yesterday over the possibly defamatory statements made in Chamorro by lawyer Pedro Atalig during a court hearing on the lawsuit that seeks to block the release of land compensation to the lawyer's client, the Malite estate.

Brown, who is facing a lawsuit that



Brown

she obtained Senate confirmation and

See **ATALIG** on Page 12

seeks to unseat her as attorney general, also defended her confirmation by the Senate, saying that she never assumed the post—even in an acting capacity—until

MVA eyes over 600K in FY05

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

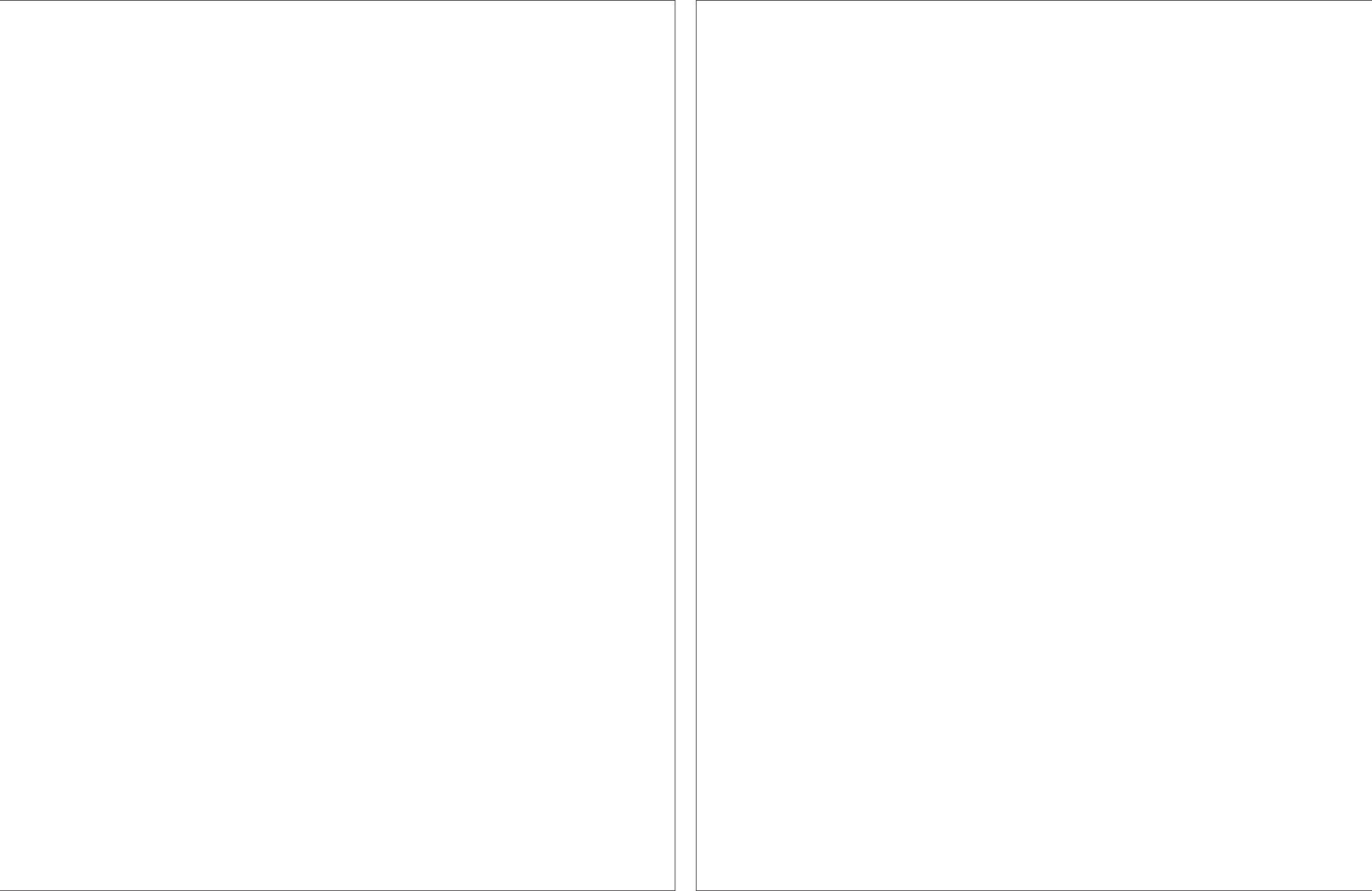
The Marianas Visitors Authority targets to bring in 15 percent more tourists to the islands in fiscal year 2005.


From Oct. 1, 2004 through Sept. 30, 2005, MVA projects to draw at least 611,486 visitors, or 80,551 more than the actual arrivals in FY 2004.

MVA managing director Vicky

See **MVA** on Page 12

Local





The Saipan Tribune accepts unsolicited pictures of birthdays, weddings, baptisms, and other community and family events for free publication. Material submitted should be original and not copyrighted, in digital or print format. Must include a caption containing complete details (a description of the event, identities of the persons in the picture, the date, and the place), the name of the contributor, and a contact number. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to edit the caption, the date of publication and the size of the picture. Contributors can e-mail their submissions to editor@saipantribune.com. To check if contributions are received, call 213-6287, 213-3448, or 213-8743.

Appointment of zoning board members questioned

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Senate minority leader Pete P. Reyes is questioning the recent appointment by the governor of members to the Saipan Zoning Board, making the issue a top agenda in tomorrow's session of the Saipan and Northern Islands legislative delegation.

"There is question. I want to question that during the session. I don't think the governor has the authority [to appoint the

members]," Reyes, who chairs the delegation, said.

He said the time for the governor to appoint members to the board had long expired. The zoning law was passed in the 9th Legislature.

"It actually expired," he said, declining to elaborate except to say, "It's going to be interesting."

The delegation meets tomorrow at 10am.



Reyes

When reached, Gov. Juan N. Babauta said that he made the appointment after consulting with his legal counsel and the Attorney General's Office.

"We knew about the concerns and so I had it reviewed by my legal counsel and AGO. It's determined that I could still make an appointment," Babauta said. "And given the fact that we need a zoning board badly,

I went ahead and made the appointment of seven people to the board. This is a very dynamic group, a very diverse group. I think they're going to make an excellent job."

Babauta said that, if the concerns are legitimate, he would be more than happy to work with the Legislature and the

local delegation.

Citing the need to rid Garapan of illegal operations, Babauta last month reconstituted the Saipan Zoning Board, naming his appointees to the panel: Maria Pangelinan, Rex Kosack, William Concepcion, Andrea Alepuyo, Connie Coward, Henry Hofschneider,

and Isidoro Cabrera.

The governor said the board is tasked to zone the Garapan commercial district area and the rest of Saipan "so that there is order in the house."

Authorities aim to transform Garapan from a red-district area to a wholesome, family-oriented destination.

Jerry Tan is SHRM Employer of the Year

The CNMI Society of Human Resource Management will honor CTSI Logistics chief executive officer Jerry Tan as its 2004 Employer of the Year.

The awarding ceremony will be held during the scheduled SHRM meeting on Thursday, 11:30am to 1pm, at Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

Following the awarding, Tan will give a presentation on what a CEO expects from the human resource department and how he thinks management can support and encourage good HR management. He will also discuss some of CTSI Logistics' human resource programs.

HR professionals association will pick their new board of directors at the meeting. Only members can vote, but guests are welcome to listen to Tan's

presentation, SHRM said.

Born in Hong Kong, Jerry Tan grew up in Guam and Saipan and has been a resident of these islands for the past 28 years. He attended high school in Guam and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Guam with a double major in accounting and management.

As executive vice president of Tan Holdings Corporation,



Tan

Tan oversees the firm's "non-appeal" companies, which include the Century Group of Companies and numerous others. He is vice president & director of Asia Pacific Hotels, which owns the Dai-ichi Hotel Saipan Beach and Guam Dai-ichi Hotel.

He is also president and CEO of the CTSI Logistics Group and a director of the Luen Thai Group. *(Agnes E. Donato)*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SODA + CARWASH = JAPAN

Members of the Marianas High School Japanese Club gave the Coca-Cola Micronesia fleet of cars and trucks a well-deserved bath on Sunday, Dec. 12, to raise funds for an upcoming trip to Japan. The students have been sponsoring fundraising activities to help pay for their trip in January. Coca-Cola said it is proud to help these hard-working students achieve their goal.

Northwest to adds flights for New Year's Day

Northwest Airlines will be operating four extra flights from Tokyo to accommodate Japanese tourists who will be traveling to the islands around New Year's Day.

Barbara Yamada, Northwest general manager, said the flights will leave Tokyo on Dec. 30 and 31, and Jan. 2 and 3. They are scheduled to depart Narita International Airport every 1:35am and take off from Saipan at 5:20am.

The additional service will be serviced by Boeing 747 aircraft, which can seat about 400 passengers. This means Northwest will be providing a total of 1,600 seats for Japanese travelers visiting the Northern Marianas.

New Year's Day is one of the most important holidays for the Japanese people. International travel activity is intensive among the Japanese especially in the beginning and toward the end of the New Year holidays.

Northwest is currently offering twice daily flights between Saipan and Narita, and daily between Saipan and Nagoya.

The airline also has a code-sharing agreement with Pacific Islands Aviation, which operates commuter flights between Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Guam.

Other airlines will also be operating additional flights during the holidays.

Japan Airlines has been providing extra flights daily

between Haneda and Saipan since Nov. 17, 2004 and will continue to do so until Jan. 3, 2005. The flights are serviced by Boeing 767 planes, which can accommodate 232 passengers each flight.

On Dec. 16, Asiana Airlines will start additional flights to and from Seoul and Saipan. Asiana will operate three flights weekly—every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday—in addition to its current daily Seoul-Saipan flights.

The extra flights will be operated until Feb. 28, 2005, and will be serviced by an Airbus 322 aircraft, which can accommodate up to 177 passengers. *(Agnes E. Donato)*

PHI

REPUBLICAN

CARS UNLIMITED

CARWASH

TRIPLE J SERVICE
CMYK

SHELL STOCKING

Red Cross solicits help for RP victims



Evangelista

CNMI midshipman accepted to US Marine flight school

Adrian Evangelista, a 2000 graduate of Tinian High School and now a First Class Midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, has been accepted to a Marine aviation helicopter training after his scheduled graduation in May 2005.

Evangelista is the son of Antonio and Evelyn Evangelista of Tinian.

Upon graduation from Tinian High School, Adrian sought an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy from Gov. Juan N. Babauta who was then the CNMI's Washington Representative to the United States. With Babauta's recommendation, Evangelista was appointed to attend the Academy in 2001.

"We are all very proud of Adrian's accomplishments," Babauta said, "and wish him well in his career development as an aviator."

As Washington representa-

tive, Babauta lobbied for several years to have the students from the CNMI appointed to military academies. From 1985 through 1995, attempts were made to have legislation passed in Congress that would allow the CNMI's Washington representative to appoint local students to the academies. In 1995, with the backing of Guam's Congressional Delegate Robert Underwood in the U. S. House of Representatives and Hawaii's Sen. Daniel Inouye in the Senate, legislation was introduced in both Houses of Congress.

In February 1996, President Bill Clinton signed Public Law 104-106 giving CNMI students the same opportunities as students from other states and territories. Since 1997, five CNMI students have met the arduous requirements to be selected to attend U. S. military service academies.

The American Red Cross International Disaster Response Unit is soliciting donations to assist the victims of several devastating storms that have impacted the Philippines.

Several back-to-back typhoons have left hundreds dead and left tens of thousands homeless.

The American Red Cross has been working closely with the Philippine National Red Cross to provide essential emergency supplies to assist those most affected by the storms.

The PNRC has deployed

disaster response teams in Narak, Real, Infanta and Polilio Island in Quezon and Dingalan in Aurora and Camarines provinces.



American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life

Individuals can help those affected by this crisis and countless others around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross

International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance, and other support to those in need. Call 1-800-HELP NOW or the NMI Chapter at 234-3459. Contributions can also be made via the internet at www.redcross.org.

Contributions specifically designated for the Philippines should be marked "AP 2032 Philippines Relief" in the memo area of the check. The American Red Cross is unfortunately not able to accept

non-cash donations such as canned food, clothing, etc.

The NMI Chapter is offering its international tracing services to NMI residents who have immediate family member living in the affected provinces who have suddenly been out of communication due to the storms. If you have a Philippine citizen family member who you are unable to contact, call the Chapter for more information at 234-3459

For more information on other organizations accepting donations for the Philippines or ways to assist those in need, contact the Chapter office at 234-3459.

shell stocking

Hensley gets a Purple Heart

United States Army Sgt. Jason D. Hensley received a Purple Heart for his bravery in action while serving in Iraq.

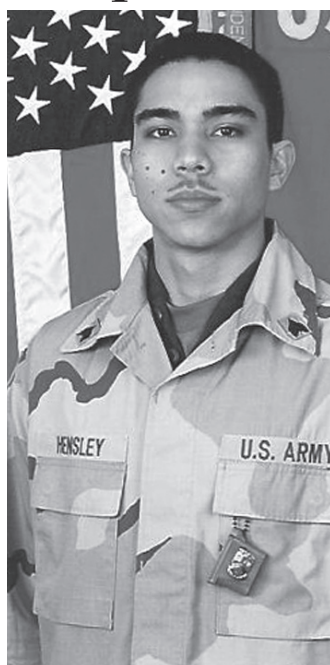
Hensley, the eldest son of Don and Rizza Hensley of Papego, joined the U.S. Army in March 2000.

He completed his basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. and was assigned to the combat engineers big Red One in Schweinfurt, Germany.

Hensley served one tour in Kosovo and had completed training with the U.N. Forces and the Army Elite Sapper School before going to Iraq in February 2004. There he was wounded in action in August 2004. After his stay in a hospital, he returned to his group in Samarra, Iraq and is still serving there.

Hensley is married to Deanna Matagolai of Susupe and the couple has two children.

His parents is asking for



everyone's prayers for the safe return of Hensley and all of the men and women serving in the U.S. military, "so we may live in peace is most appreciated."

Island Snapshots



INDUCTION
CNMI POWER officers and members led by its president Socorro Borja pose with Philippine Consul General Wilfrido Maximo, center, Consul Wenceslao Gayola, labor representative Joan Lavilla, and friends during the group's induction ceremony Sunday afternoon at the Senate chamber.

LIBERTY DONES



LUNCH WITH MAN'AMKO
Lawmakers led by Reps. Heinz Hofschneider and David Apatang and friends join a luncheon gathering at Man'amko Center Friday.

LIBERTY DONES



BLACKJACK CHAMP
Tinian Dynasty casino general manager Ken Barberis poses with the new Blackjack champion, Shimada Yasushi from Japan. Shimada took home \$60,000 in prize money.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONGRATULATIONS
Shan Seman and Rose Fejeran pose with their daughter Makailly Hannah during her christening on Saturday, Dec. 11. Celebrations immediately followed at the District 4 beach, North side.

MARK RABAGO



BICOL ASSOCIATION
Bicol Association of Northern Mariana Islands led by its president, Lito Marquez, pose for a souvenir picture shortly after a turnover and induction ceremony on Saturday night. The group formally turned over the Bicol Pavilion to the CNMI government during the event held at the pavilion site in Susupe.

LIBERTY DONES



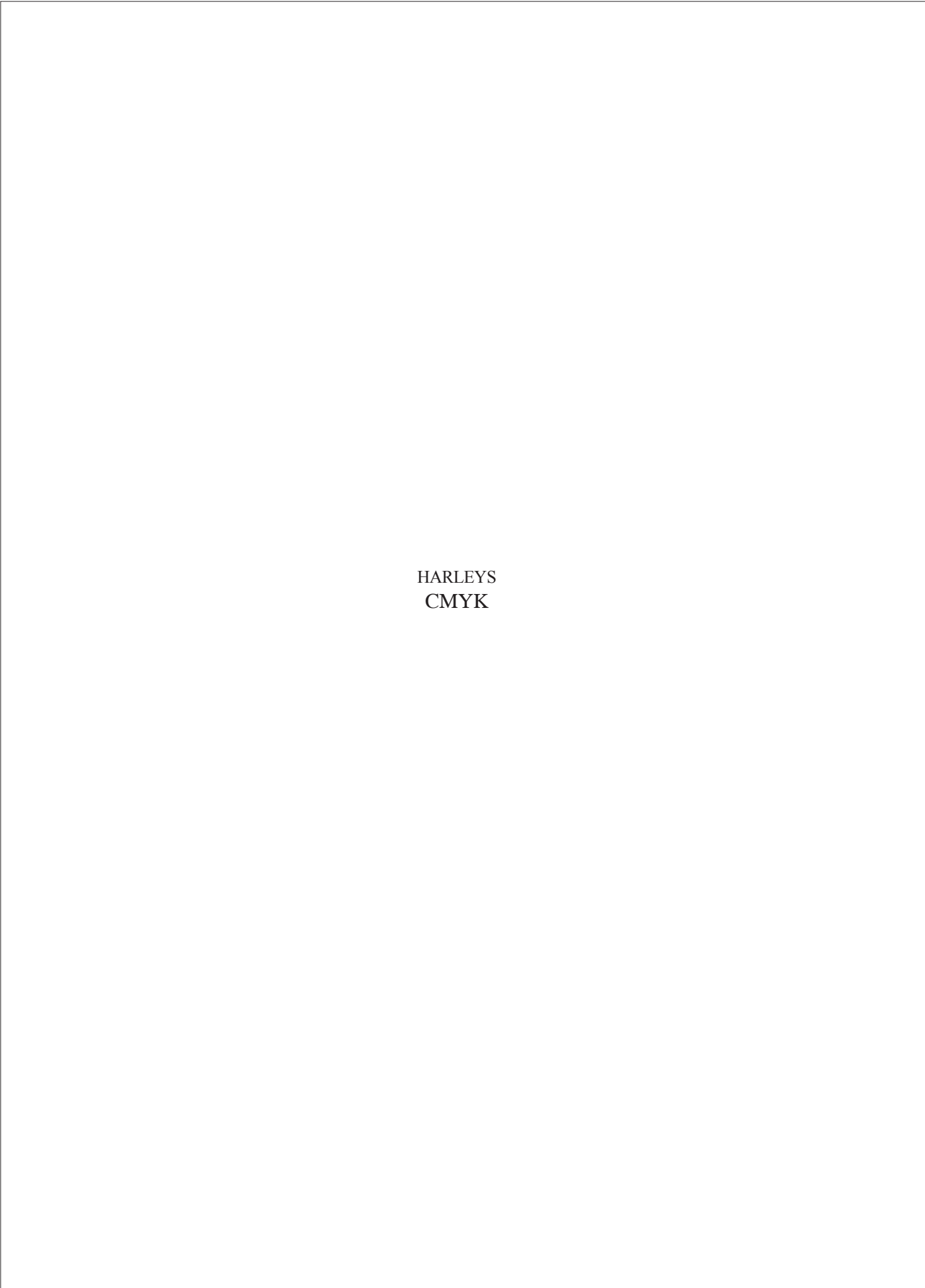
PAVILION TURNOVER
Gov. Juan N. Babauta, second right, and Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, right, receive an acceptance plaque during the turnover of the Bicol Pavilion by the Bicol Association of NMI Inc. (BIANMI) to the CNMI government Saturday night. Presentors are BIANMI past presidents engineers Cecilio "Jun" Dela Cruz, left, and Ruel R. Villacruses.

LIBERTY DONES



MALLARDS' PRIDE
Newly inducted members to the Garapan Elementary School Honor Society sing during the 7th Annual Induction Ceremony Friday night at Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach.

SHAN SEMAN



Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Coral peril

Twenty percent of the world's coral reefs "have been effectively destroyed and show no immediate prospect of recovery." An additional 24 percent "are under imminent risk of collapse through human pressures," and an additional 26 percent "are under a longer term threat of collapse." These are only some of the conclusions of an exhaustive new report by 240 scientists in 98 countries, working under the auspices of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network. Coral reefs, in addition to being breathtakingly beautiful, are among the cradles of life on Earth—hotbeds of biodiversity critical to sustaining oceanic health. But a combination of global warming, pollution, overfishing, diseases and other factors is ravaging reefs worldwide. While Australian and Pacific reefs remain relatively healthy, the report documents devastating declines elsewhere, including the Caribbean region, where coral cover on many reefs has declined by up to 80 percent. If something isn't done soon, it will be too late for many reefs to recover.

The dire threat to the world's—and America's—oceans is hardly a surprise, and it isn't limited to coral reefs either. Two major task forces have recently documented the grave ecological conditions of America's coastal waters. The studies basically show the same thing: People are using the oceans in a fashion that can't be sustained, and, absent serious change across a range of human behaviors, the oceans will die off. Yet despite the widespread agreement on the nature and severity of the problem, action has been slow.

Along with the related issue of climate change, this is the preeminent environmental issue of our time. President Bush should make it a priority of his second term. An opportunity to begin doing so is coming; the administration by law has to respond by Dec. 20 to the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, which Congress created in 2000 to examine America's policy toward its coastal waters. So far, there is no indication the administration is contemplating the needed dramatic shifts in policy. But the oceans—and their precious corals—cannot afford delay.

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Let's stop sleepwalking through history

By STEWART L. UDALL
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Scientists tell us that global warming is an omnipresent reality, that in this century it will change the lives of all of us and alter our relationship to the physical world. Only a comprehensive, global strategy will enable humanity to gradually cope with its implications.

Robust, immediate action is needed. Forget wrangling about ratification of the modest Kyoto treaty. Instead, the 20 industrialized countries (let's call them the Power Bloc) that produce most of the world's destructive carbon dioxide emissions must join together to take action.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, stripped of its military trappings, might be a model, and the United States, responsible for 25 percent of those emissions, must lead the way. President Bush has the power and the prestige to convene such an entity and galvanize such an effort. It could be his most important legacy.

For the last two centuries the burning of fossil fuel—coal, natural gas and crude oil—has been propelling human civilization. But fossil resources are finite—they really will run out—and their use has altered Earth's atmosphere. On both fronts, Americans are in denial.

Why are we so blind? We have been conditioned to believe that catastrophe will not occur, that humankind is perpetually on the threshold of discoveries that will magically solve our dilemmas.

As a freshman congressman in 1955, I sat spellbound as physicist John Von Neuman claimed that by 1980 nuclear power plants would produce electricity so cheap it wouldn't have to be metered. Such promises have fostered a belief that the United States will achieve "energy independence" and that science will produce easy panaceas (remember fusion and breeder reactors?). They have even spawned skepticism that the phenomenon called global warming is real.

Organizing an international effort and a NATO-style group to combat real energy and environmental problems would be a big step toward ending our belief in magic. What would such an organization look like?

Each country would bear the expense of sending its best scientists, entrepreneurs, energy specialists, architects and planners to serve on policymaking panels. Each nation could help pay for necessary research and development; logic would suggest that each should ante up based on the carbon dioxide its energy installations produced the previous year.

Fast action must be the goal: establishing priorities, agreeing on what is possible, spreading and inventing strategies that curb fossil

fuel use and increase renewable resource use.

There are four sectors in which dramatic gains could be made. First: electric power use and production. Generating electricity also generates 40 percent of greenhouse gases. A study by the Electric Power Research Institute has concluded that this industry can be fundamentally transformed through serious investment in clean, efficient new means of production and transmission and such simple expedients as sensors that would turn off the lights when people left a room.

The second sector in which change is achievable involves the built environment. Already architects such as Arizona's Edward Mazria are proving that buildings can be operated with "green" efficiency at little extra cost. Using existing renewable energy technologies (solar, thermal, wind and biomass), buildings can be made "carbon-neutral," requiring no fossil-fuel energy to operate. This alone would eliminate nearly half of current global carbon dioxide emissions.

Next come cars and our extravagant automotive transportation system. The Power Bloc must coordinate and agree on ways to encourage—even mandate—the spread of fuel-efficient cars (including hybrids and lighter vehicles) and new fuels.

In the United States, we have finally begun to consider encouraging fuel saving in the way highway systems are designed (allowing hybrids into the carpool lane, for example) or through the carrot and the stick of taxation. We must do more and we must do it in concert with the rest of the world.

Finally, the fourth sector: exploiting renewable energy sources. Money and research are required to perfect new ways of generating and delivering solar, wind and geothermal power. The small actions of individual governments—like Colorado's vote to require its electric companies to generate 10 percent of their power via renewables in the next 10 years—must be multiplied nationally and internationally.

Could Bush bring together representatives from China, Russia, India and the other members in the Power Bloc to address such issues? Could he jump-start a fresh global effort to contain and roll back what his administration calls "climate change"? Of course he could.

But will he? As was the case when President Nixon went to China and President Reagan made overtures to the Soviet Union, when modern U.S. presidents have acted boldly—and often against expectations—they have changed the world. We can only hope that Bush has the same lofty ambition.

Udall represented Arizona in the House from 1954 to 1961 and was secretary of the Interior from 1961 to 1969.

Babauta vetoes grants office bill

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Citing that that it would jeopardize existing grants and that it lacks funding sources, Gov. Juan N. Babauta vetoed a bill that aims to create a centralized office for grant assistance.

Babauta disapproved Senate Bill 14-42, authored by Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano, which intended to develop the grant office within the Office of the Management and Budget to serve as "the CNMI State Clearing-house Agency."

This is part of the goal to take full advantage of all federal grants for the Commonwealth.

"Although the intent of the bill is laudable, the proposed mechanism for funding the newly established office

could endanger the continued eligibility of the CNMI for existing grants," said the governor in his transmittal letter to the Legislature dated Dec. 9, 2004.

He said the bill, which requires the hiring of staff to monitor all federal grants received by the CNMI, provides that the office "should" be funded by the pool of indirect costs received from all federal grants within the Executive Branch, with the exception of all Homeland Security grants.

Babauta said these "indirect costs" have always been a part of the revenue resource for budget appropriation.

"This means that if this measure were enacted, some programs and activities in various departments and agencies would have to be eliminated or reduced in order to accommodate the funding for this office," he said.

Further, the governor said that the Commonwealth Ports Authority and other agencies have opposed the bill, expressing concerns that it would jeopardize existing and future grants.

Specifically, CPA has indicated that some of its grants would be adversely affected if indirect costs funded by such grants were utilized to manage or implement grants for other agencies within the government.

Babauta said the overall management of grants in the CNMI could be improved by ensuring that departments and agencies are more aggressive in following up on their grant applications.

He encouraged the Legislature to work closely with the Department of Finance and OMB to reintroduce the measure "in a form that addresses the concerns set forth in this communication."

STATELESS

From Page 1

the adoption of the Covenant and its ratification.

The reported filing of pleading by the USAO came about even as the CNMI government strongly expressed its support for the granting of American citizenship to stateless persons. Gov.

Juan N. Babauta earlier said that these persons' political and immigration status unintentionally resulted from their birth in the Northern Marianas between Jan. 1, 1974 and Nov. 4, 1986.

Babauta earlier said he would like a citizenship swearing in for the stateless persons after Dec. 16. He had been vocal about appealing to the federal government not to take the matter before the U.S. Supreme

Court. Scores of stateless persons have also filed their passport applications with the U.S. Passport Office upon the Babauta administration's advice.

The U.S. Court of Appeals earlier overturned Saipan federal court's ruling, which declared that stateless persons are not U.S. citizens. Later, the appellate court denied the State Department's request for a rehearing on the case.

ATALIG

From Page 1

was sworn into office.

The Malite estate controversy apparently triggered the filing of the lawsuit that seeks to unseat Brown. Former Senate President Juan S. Demapan, represented by Atalig, filed the complaint in court on Thursday last week.

"I'm somewhat saddened that Demapan agreed to be the plaintiff," Brown said. "We don't have an axe to grind against anyone."

Brown said she was "deeply troubled" by Atalig's statements during the Malite estate case hearing. She characterized the statement as one that could have made one wash a child's mouth with soap if the latter said it, based on a translation by a Chamorro-speaking person.

In that hearing, Atalig spoke almost entirely in Chamorro. He explained after the hearing that Brown had no authority to bring the lawsuit to court, questioning the validity of her confirmation.

Brown said the AGO is in the process of translating Atalig's statement in court, adding that she is open to legal options, such as looking into the lawyer's ethical behavior.

"My attorneys conduct themselves with civility," Brown said. "We go on facts and law....I expect civility in the court of law."

The attorney general also noted the

motivation behind the filing of the suit against her amid the Malite estate controversy. She said that, when Demapan filed a similar lawsuit against former attorney general Maya Kara, the former Senate president was facing illegal gambling charges.

Brown said the 90-day clock within which she needed to be confirmed upon her nomination by Gov. Juan N. Babauta did not expire before her Senate confirmation, explaining that she never assumed the post from June to Dec. 30, 2003.

Atalig pointed out that Brown failed to muster the constitutional requirement for confirmation within the 90-day deadline following her appointment by the governor on June 16, 2003. The lawyer said the 90-day deadline fell on Sept. 14, 2003, when no Senate session was held.

"Thus, the Senate did not confirm Pamela S. Brown as attorney general on Sept. 14, 2003. Plaintiff [Demapan] contends that as soon as the 90-day Senate confirmation [deadline] expired, Pamela S. Brown's nomination as attorney general was rejected and she could not be re-nominated," Atalig said in the suit against Brown.

Atalig cited 1 CMC §2904, which states: "If the appointment is not confirmed by the Senate...within 90 days from the date the person was temporarily appointed, the appointment shall automatically terminate, the position

shall become vacant and the person nominated shall not be re-nominated."

On Sept. 17, 2003, the Senate explicitly rejected Brown's nomination, according to Atalig. The Senate action transpired when the then minority bloc led by Sen. Pete Reyes took control over the Upper House's leadership. The new leadership called for a session and with four senators present, three of them voted to reject Brown's confirmation. One lawmaker abstained from voting.

On the same day, Reyes, who took over the post of Senate President, wrote a letter to Babauta to inform the governor that the Senate rejected his nomination of Brown.

On Nov. 17, 2003, however, five senators convened on Rota to regain the Senate leadership. The four minority senators who had taken over the leadership were absent. In that session, the five senators unanimously voted in favor of Brown's confirmation.

The suit against Brown also alleged that she has been receiving salary and incurring expenses as attorney general unlawfully. It asked the court to compel repayment of funds received by Brown from the government in the form of salary and expenses as attorney general.

The suit also asked the court to permanently bar the CNMI government from paying Brown the salary and expenses of an attorney general, whether in official or acting capacities.

cal year 2005, surpassing the half-million mark for the first time in five years.

The 500,000 threshold was last hit in 2000, when the CNMI registered 526,561 tourists.

The tourism industry started experiencing a downturn in 2001 as a result of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Visitor arrivals reached only 497,696 in that year.

The impact of the 9/11 events was even more felt in 2002, when the CNMI received only 424,932 visitors.

In 2003, the industry's recovery efforts were stunted by the SARS epidemic and the outbreak of the Iraq war. The Northern Marianas welcomed 458,444 visitors in that year.

COURT

From Page 1

yesterday that her office asked the court for the extension of the TRO's deadline. She said the AGO's attorneys are drafting a pleading requesting the court for a preliminary injunction.

"If this motion [for TRO] were not granted, plaintiff [CNMI government] would suffer the irreparable injury of incurring a large public debt that might take many years for the Commonwealth to repay," Lizama stated in his order.

"Defendants' argument that this is not irreparable harm because the money could be recovered by subsequent suit is not convincing. Once the money is disbursed, it might easily be consumed by estate expenses and therefore be rendered unrecoverable," he said.

The CNMI government, represented by Brown, recently filed with the Superior Court a complaint that sought to prevent the monies' disbursement from the government's Land Compensation Fund.

The complaint impleaded as defendants the Marianas Public Lands Authority; its commissioner Edward DeLeon Guerrero and its board of directors, including chair Ana Demapan-Castro and members Nicolas Nekai, Felix Sasamoto, Manny Villagomez, and Benita Atalig-Manglona; the Commonwealth Development Authority; and Malite estate administrator Jesus Tudela.

The AGO said in the complaint that there are circumstances surrounding the transaction, which create a "strong appearance of ethical impropriety and conflicts of interest."

The lawsuit sparked the filing of a separate action by former Senate President Juan S. Demapan, which sought to declare that Brown is holding the position of attorney general unlawfully. In that case, Malite estate attorney Pedro Atalig, a former Supreme Court justice, represents Demapan, brother of Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan.

Atalig had argued that Brown has no authority to bring the lawsuit before the court, questioning the validity of her confirmation as attorney general. He said the Trust Territory government, through a 1978 court order that awarded only some \$3,682 to the Malite estate for the condemnation of a parcel of land that now forms part of the Marianas High School, treated the Malite heirs "like dirt."

Atalig also said that, in preventing the release of the \$3.45 million compensation to the Malite heirs, the CNMI government continues the unfair treatment of the heirs by the TT government.

In a press conference yesterday, Brown said the lawsuit filed on her behalf by the AGO's civil division chief Benjamin Sachs also protects the judicial branch from an act by the Legislature, in the sense that the Land Compensation Act, a legislation that mandates land compensation for the government's land-taking, should not deal with adjudicated court cases.

She said that, while she feels sym-

pathetic to the situation of the Malite heirs, MPLA's interpretation that the new law covers resolved cases is inappropriate. She insisted that the lawsuit was filed to protect the interests of the "MPLA, CDA, the CNMI people and public lands."

In addition to the alleged improprieties that taint the land compensation transaction, Brown also said that MPLA board chair Demapan-Castro is "somehow related" to V.M. Sablan, which conducted the appraisal that pegged the compensation at \$3.45 million, on the assumption that the land taking happened in 1991, when the real estate's market value was estimated at \$500 per square meter. The TT government actually took the land in 1968.

Regarding other alleged improprieties that taint the transaction, Sachs had also pointed out in the complaint that Atalig is a former member of the MPLA board. Atalig and his brother and Malite estate co-counsel Antonio Atalig, who represented their client in their request for land compensation before the MPLA, are brothers to MPLA board member Atalig-Manglona.

Sachs said Atalig-Manglona voted in favor of the land compensation request, adding that the board member should have known that her brother would derive substantial contingency fee from the land compensation. Pedro Atalig denied this claim, saying that the board member abstained from voting.

According to Sachs, MPLA legal counsel Raymond Quichocho shares an office with Pedro Atalig, whose office manager, Juan Demapan, is brother of the MPLA chair.

Sachs also questioned the requisition signed by the acting commissioner, DeLeon Guerrero, amid challenges to the legitimacy of his appointment as MPLA commissioner. The Land Compensation Act of 2002 requires the MPLA commissioner to sign all requisitions for land compensation payments.

He noted that Henry Hofschneider, who was earlier unilaterally terminated by the MPLA chair from the post of commissioner, claims that he remains commissioner. He also questioned the termination of Hofschneider by Demapan-Castro, saying that the action was done without a proper board meeting.

The court said several issues relating to the Malite's land compensation claim and the government's lawsuit need to be resolved before the monies should be released.

"The court sees numerous important and difficult legal issues involved in this case, including questions about the propriety of the current compensation claim, including the amount to be paid and the fact that the issue was not resolved as part of the ongoing probate of the estate of Angel Malite, as well as the fairness of the initial condemnation as to the value given and as to whether compensation should have gone to the estate or directly to the heirs in accordance with then existing law," Judge Lizama stated in the TRO.

Pedro Atalig could not be reached for comment as of press time, in connection with the court's TRO and on Brown's statements.

MVA

From Page 1

I. Benavente said the agency will be more aggressive in promoting the CNMI as a tourist destination, particularly in Korea.

The market posted low arrivals in the previous year for several reasons—mainly the availability of less expensive destinations, the sluggish Korean economy, and MVA's own need to upgrade its marketing strategy, Benavente said.

"Maintaining the cleanliness and safety of our islands is also very important because that's what attracts people to our destination. We have to keep our

ocean clean and protect Managaha [Island]," she added.

MVA wants arrivals from Japan to increase by 9 percent, or from 384,531 last year to 420,000 this year. Japanese visitors account for 68.7 percent of the total projected arrivals.

MVA also hopes to increase arrivals from Korea by 12.7 percent or 8,324 visitors; China by 88 percent or 25,762 visitors; Hong Kong by 140 percent or 2,799 visitors; Taiwan by 867 percent or 4,309 visitors; Philippines by 19 percent or 974 visitors; USA by 4 percent or 606 visitors; Guam by 10 percent or 1,916 visitors; and other markets by 6 percent or 392 visitors.

Visitor arrivals totaled 530,936 in fis-

OIL

From Page 11

U.N. sanctions against Iraq, including the oil-for-food program, are worth close scrutiny not just because some of that money was stolen but because, taken as a whole, this represents one of the most successful uses of international sanctions on record. Any effort to correct past

abuses and forestall future ones should proceed from the recognition that, despite its defects, this regime served the international community's security and humanitarian objectives exceptionally well.

The writer, a former assistant secretary of state, is director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at Rand Corp.

Business

Weekend holiday shopping appears mixed

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—With less than two weeks of shopping left until Christmas, the nation's malls and stores stepped up discounts over the weekend, but business appeared to be mixed, according to analysts.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc.—which became more aggressive on pricing after a disappointing start to the holiday shopping season—continues to struggle. The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer said on Saturday that for the week ended Friday, sales of winter merchandise were below expectations, and its general merchandise business was not as strong as food sales. However, the world's largest discounter is still sticking to its December sales forecast.

Sears, Roebuck and Co., which plied shoppers with early bird specials on Saturday, reported "good customer traffic," according to Bill Masterson, a company spokesman.

Meanwhile, business at

luxury stores continued to be robust, with designer handbags, jewelry and items like \$1,200 massage chairs being snapped up by well-heeled shoppers.

Karen MacDonald, a spokeswoman at mall operator Taubman Centers Inc., said business on Saturday at luxury chains was up in the high single-digit to double-digit percentages from a year ago. For the rest of the merchants, sales were even with last year or rose a modest single-digit percentage from a year ago.

"Retailers are all revved up, all ready to go, and the consumers are just taking their sweet time, walking around, checking out items, but not buying," said Marshal Cohen, senior industry analyst at NPD Group Inc., a market research company based in Port Washington, N.Y. He checked out malls in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut over the weekend, and noted that traffic was disappointing.

He added, "For the luxury market, it feels like Christmas, but to everybody else—the



Men relax in the Men's Creche, at the Marks and Spencer flagship store in Marble Arch, London, Thursday Dec. 9, 2004. Large brown leather sofas, a TV-set playing the world's greatest soccer matches, and newspapers were on offer to provide a satisfactory compromise to women tired of dragging a grumbling partner behind them on their shopping spree. Men's Creches have been installed in six stores around the country.

midlevel and lower-end customer—it is not going to be a great Christmas."

Ellen Tolley, a spokeswoman

at the National Retail Federation, estimated that traffic will probably be up only slightly this past weekend from a year ago. She be-

lieves that at this point, shoppers have done less shopping than a year ago. She blamed it in part on unseasonably warm weath-

er, which tempted shoppers to turn to outdoor activities, and the increasing popularity of gift cards, the bulk of which are purchased during the last few days before Christmas.

After a disappointing start to the holiday season, merchants have seen a modest pace in business since, and were relying even more on a spending splurge this past weekend to recoup lost sales and meet their holiday sales forecasts. Last year, the second Saturday before Christmas was the fifth busiest day of the year, according to the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Still, Tolley expects the nation's stores are "on par" for a moderate holiday season, sticking with the trade association's forecast for a 4.5 percent gain in total retail sales, which exclude restaurant and auto sales.

Tolley noted that the holiday season, like other years, will be decided at the last minute, and is pinning her hopes on procrastinators, who are waiting for better deals.

Wall Street looks ahead to fed meeting

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street will be looking to the Federal Reserve in the week ahead, hoping the nation's monetary policy maker will issue a positive outlook on the economy and potentially give stocks a year-end boost.

The Fed's Open Market Committee meets Tuesday and is widely expected to raise the nation's benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point, to 2.25 percent. The move assumes that the economy is healthy enough to withstand a higher rate.

However, with the dollar still weak against foreign currencies and wholesale prices creeping higher, a rate hike could be necessary even if the Fed sees weakness in the economy. The dollar's woes and higher prices could bring on inflation, and tightening the money supply through a rate hike would assure investors that inflation won't get out of hand.

As usual, Wall Street will be looking far more intently at the Fed's policy statement, since the rate hike itself is considered a done deal. The Fed has been cautious with its words, but is still expected to retain its stand that a "measured pace" of rate hikes is needed to forestall inflation.

Last week, investor uncertainty pressured stocks as Wall Street contended with volatile oil prices and a mix of economic data that left a muddled picture of the economy that many hope the Fed will clarify. For the week, the Dow fell 0.46 percent, the S&P dropped 0.27 percent and the Nasdaq was down 0.93 percent.

Tokyo stocks higher, dollar down vs yen

TOKYO (AP)—Tokyo stocks edged higher Monday morning as the currency market remained relatively stable. The U.S. dollar dipped against the Japanese yen.

The Nikkei Stock Average of 225 issues gained 73.23 points, or 0.68 percent, to end morning trading at 10,830.03. On Friday, the index fell 19.83 points, or 0.18 percent.

The dollar bought 104.93 yen at 11 a.m. local time in Tokyo, down 0.29 yen from late Friday and also below the 105.15 yen in New York later that day.

On the stock market, investors bought autos and technology issues following the dollar's initial strength against the yen.

A stronger dollar helps Japanese exporters' overseas

earnings when converted back into yen.

Automakers Honda Motor Co., Nissan Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Corp. edged up. Technology issues Advantest Corp. and Kyocera Corp. were also higher.

The index of all issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's first section added 5.60 points, or 0.52 percent, to 1,089.39 yen Monday morning. The TOPIX lost 3.77 points, or 0.35 percent, Friday.

In New York on Friday, U.S. stocks ended lower amid concerns over the economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 9.60, or 0.09 percent, to 10,543.22. The Nasdaq composite index fell 0.94, or 0.04 percent, to 2,128.07.

Economic Data:

So far, the holiday shopping season has been disappointing for many retailers, and their stocks have suffered as well. On Monday, the Commerce Department will issue a report on retail sales for November, which are expected to be flat, compared with a 0.2 percent rise in October. In addition, Commerce will report on business inventories, which are expected to rise 0.5 percent for November, much higher than the 0.1 percent climb in October. If the expectations are correct, that would mean more inventory

is sitting on shelves and in warehouses than going home with holiday shoppers.

On Friday, investors worried about inflation will see firsthand whether rising wholesale prices are being passed on to the consumer. The Labor Department will issue its Consumer Price Index reading for November, which is expected to rise 0.2 percent - less than the 0.6 percent hike seen in October. "Core" CPI, with food and fuel costs excluded, is expected to rise 0.2 percent as well, on par with October's rise.

Attacks blamed for Iraq's fuel shortages

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—Iraq's oil minister blamed insurgents for the country's worsening fuel shortages, saying saboteurs have targeted the oil industry to increase pressure ahead of the Jan. 30 elections.

The fuel shortage—ironic in a country with some of the world's largest petroleum reserves—has embarrassed Iraq's interim government. Other services also are barely functioning. Electricity supplies remain erratic, with frequent outages plaguing the Baghdad and other cities.

Lines at gas stations in Baghdad stretch for miles, forcing some drivers to wait for 18 hours before reaching the pumps. Although the official price of gasoline is about 5 cents a gallon, it can reach 50 cents on the black market.

Oil Minister Thamir Ghabbhan laid the blame for the shortages on the rebels. "They want to make fuel shortages, (provoke) chaos in the country

and prove the government has failed," Ghabbhan told a news conference.

Exports from Iraq's northern oil fields resumed Saturday, after insurgents last month blew up part of the main pipeline carrying Iraqi crude to Turkey.

An official from the state-run Northern Oil Co., speaking on condition of anonymity, said 500,000 barrels of crude will be pumped daily from northern Iraq oil fields to the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

The pipeline connecting the northern Kirkuk oil fields with Ceyhan was blown up Nov. 15 near Safra, 40 miles southwest of Kirkuk. The attack shut down oil exports from the north.

Iraq was pumping an average of 400,000 barrels of crude a day through Turkey before a series of sabotages in early November. In that month, there were 27 attacks against pipelines, compared to only two attacks in February, Ghabbhan said.

Insurgents have repeatedly targeted the country's crucial oil infrastructure in a bid to undermine the U.S.-backed interim government.

The Oil Ministry said that between August and October, Iraq lost \$7 billion in potential revenues due to sabotage.

About 750,000 foreign cars are estimated to have come from neighboring countries since the fall of Saddam Hussein last year, and fuel consumption for the past year has soared to 12 million gallons.

Ghabbhan also accused criminal gangs of stealing large quantities of Iraqi oil by punching holes into the unguarded oil pipelines and then smuggling stolen oil out of the country.

"This has affected the operations in Basra refinery and the pumping of oil products to several parts in the country," he said. Ghabbhan urged security forces to take additional measures to secure the network of pipelines.

AOL abandons exclusivity in favor of ads

DULLES, Va. (AP)—The walls surrounding America Online Inc.'s well-manicured gardens are crumbling. In a move both risky and essential, AOL is abandoning its strategy of exclusivity and will free much of its music, sports and other programming to non-subscribers in hopes of boosting ad sales.

The decision could help the company counter declining subscriptions as Internet users move to high-speed connections. At least that's the plan.

The danger is that the bold new strategy will instead accelerate the erosion of AOL's core revenue source.

To begin with, the change pits AOL against big guns Yahoo Inc. and Microsoft Corp., which in turn are looking over their shoulder wondering what search leader Google Inc. will do next.

"AOL is left looking like the race car in a race that nobody wants to run in anymore," said Rob Enderle, an industry ana-

lyst in San Jose, Calif. "AOL's dead as it exists. It has to find a way to become relevant again."

Though AOL executives insist the company's short-term prospects are healthy, they agree they ultimately must rely less on their legacy subscription business. With the recent renaissance in online advertising, AOL wants a bigger share of those dollars—and to do that, it must open its members-only "walled gardens" to the public.

Asia

World

tribune graduation ad

Overdrive

joeten motors
+2 color

Life & Style

The Iraq war through the troops' eyes

The National Endowment for the Arts earlier this year asked U.S. soldiers and their families to write down what they saw, heard and felt during the Iraq war for a program called "Operation Homecoming." The reflections compiled to date offer a poignant glimpse into soldiers' lives and how they are affected by war.

"There's no voice more authentic or captivating than those who are on the front lines," said Andrew Carroll, who is editing the best submissions into an anthology that will be published in 2006.

From Mosul, Iraq, soldier Ryan Alexander wrote a poem about a pregnant cat, "a happy distraction" that he fed from prepackaged military meals. Ignoring warnings from medics, Alexander put on a plastic glove and petted the wild creature, "who may be the one true heart and mind that America had won over."

Back home in Colorado Springs, Colo., Melissa Herman imagined what her reaction would have been had her Army husband been aboard a helicopter that crashed in Iraq.

"I can feel the devastation and hurt of knowing that I am alone," she wrote. "I feel trapped in a tornado: screaming, crying, angry then numb."

Some 400 pieces of wartime writing have reached the NEA since April, and thousands more are expected.

The program has brought top-notch writers—including Tom Clancy, James McBride and Bobbie Ann Mason—to military bases across the country. Wednesday's stop at a Navy base in Coronado, Calif., included Mark Bowden, whose book, "Black Hawk Down," chronicled the frenzied firefight that enveloped U.S. special forces on the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia.

Bowden told a room of sailors and Marines that writing down their experiences can be good therapy. "It's good for the soul," he said.

The results so far are both raw and compelling. The NEA provided several samples to The Associated Press and the program's director, John Parrish Peede, described others.

A musician with a Marine band wrote about how hard it was to keep up bandmembers' morale in the wilting 120-degree heat. A lieutenant colonel described escorting a service-member's body back home. A member of a Navy construction battalion described how the sand kept clogging the gears of his bulldozer.

Army Sgt. Michael Thomas wrote of choking back tears when his unit returned from Iraq and received a 3 a.m. greeting from elderly veterans for their long-delayed homecoming at an airport in Maine.

"Their now-feeble right



Navy sailors Johansen Laurel, right, Daniel Jones, center, and Marine Corps First Lt. Jane Blair, left, pick up writing materials before the start of a writing workshop for U.S. military personnel called "Operation Homecoming" at Naval Air Station North Island in Coronado, Calif. Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2004.

arms stiffened in salutes, their left hands holding coffee, snacks and cell phones for us," Thomas wrote.

Army Capt. Jim Sosnicky of Castle Rock, Colo., wrote about Mariam, a 28-year-old Iraqi woman who sold cigarettes to Americans from a dusty shop in the heavily fortified Green Zone, home to the U.S. Em-

bassy and headquarters of the U.S.-sponsored interim government in downtown Baghdad.

When an explosion boomed in the distance, Sosnicky asked Mariam what she thought: car

bomb or mortar round? Definitely a mortar round, she told him.

"Most girls in the U.S. have a tin ear for such things," Sosnicky wrote.

Operation Homecoming, most of which is supported by a \$500,000 budget from Boeing Co., has found some soldiers bursting with literary thoughts. Peede said he picked up the phone in his office in Washington, D.C. and listened to a soldier in Iraq read a poem over the crackling static on a satellite phone.

After attending an Operation Homecoming workshop in Nebraska, Lt. Col. Christopher Cohoes of Elkhorn, Neb., submitted two letters he wrote in Iraq to his young children. One captured his thoughts when every light in the cockpit went out in mid-flight.

"It is a full moon tonight, but I still needed a flashlight to see in the cockpit," he wrote. "The first thing I thought after making sure the engines still worked was what you would've said, Cavan, had you been there. 'Hey dad, the lights went out.' I started laughing. Then I got most of my lights back and came back to base." (AP)

Egypt unveils 2,500-year-old tomb, mummies

BAHARIYA, Egypt (AP)—Archaeologists unveiled Sunday the tomb of a member of a powerful family that governed a swath of western Egypt about 2,500 years ago, along with a dozen recently discovered mummies from Roman times.

The mummies are among 400-500 located thus far in what Egypt has dubbed the Valley of the Golden Mummies—grounds where thousands were believed entombed.

The rare limestone sarcophagus that covered Badi-Herkhib - the elder brother of a governor of Bahariya who lived around 500 B.C. - was discovered last week, allowing archaeologists to more closely study a family that ruled this part of Egypt.

"This family was so powerful, so wealthy, that they could import the limestone from about 100 kilometers (62 miles) away," said Mansour Boraik, a senior archaeologist overseeing the Bahariya site.

The large sarcophagus was several inches thick and weighed an estimated 15 tons.

The cemetery, covering about 2 square miles, is located 235 miles southwest of Cairo.



Pharaonic skulls related to the 26th Dynasty in about 600 B.C. seen on display at the valley of the Golden mummies near Bahariya oasis in western Egypt, some 375 Km 225 miles west of Cairo, Sunday, Dec. 12, 2004. The site, known as the Valley of the Golden Mummies, was discovered in 1996.

Egypt's chief archaeologist, Zahi Hawass, said the discovery of Badi-Herkhib's tomb was unexpected.

"As a matter of fact, the family tree did not mention the person we found," Hawass said.

He said the tomb was robbed during the Roman era.

A dozen mummies from middle-class backgrounds also were displayed in their family tomb in a different part of the burial grounds. The mummies, most of them in a deteriorated condition, were found in

three burial chambers, lying in neat rows.

The mummies were part of a group of about 20 found last week. Boraik estimated the cemetery holds about 15,000 mummies.

The mummies discovered last week were not gilded, according to Boraik. The Egyptian antiquities council said otherwise last week.

Greek gold coins found with the mummies were believed to be left to bribe the ferryman in the afterlife.

DPW044

Crichton plunges into environment debate

By COLLEEN LONG
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Michael Crichton is a big man with big ideas, a storyteller of nearly 7 feet who turns popular science into popular fiction.

In “Timeline,” he sends characters back in time using quantum physics. Aliens deliver a threatening disease to the world in “The Andromeda Strain,” and in “Jurassic Park,” perhaps his most accessible novel, dinosaurs are created from ancient DNA.

Now he’s questioning global warming in his new thriller, “State of Fear,” about eco-terrorists who plot a series of natural disasters—earthquakes,

underwater landslides, a tsunami—to prove that global warming is a threat to humanity. A ragtag band of scientists and lawyers uncovers the scheme.

“State of Fear” sounds like a typical Crichton thriller, but this time he’s using the novel as a platform, tacking on a five-page message stating his notion that the theory of global warming is speculative at best, and a 14-page bibliography of works supporting his views.

“It was very difficult to get my head around the idea that this widely held belief may not be true, and I thought, ‘If I’m going to do a book, how would I structure it so that someone could even hear it a little bit?’” he says, crammed into an arm-

chair meant for size regular at his hotel suite, his youthful face dimpled as he yanks out different graphs to illustrate his point.

Crichton, with more than 100 million copies of his books in print, is ready to defend his view—he’s armed with a tape recorder, a steep pile of colorful graphs, scientific data and text books. Pushing rimless glasses up higher on his nose, he’s eager to discuss the environment and he’s certain his ideas are right. But he doesn’t allow ego to swallow him and is quick to laugh at himself and back off when his lecture becomes overbearing.

More than three years ago, the 6-foot-9-inch Crichton read about global warming and grew curious. Having a conventional view that global warming is a threat, he began to study climate data and charts, expecting to find proof. However, the more he hunted, the more unsatisfied he became with the evaluations and speculations.

“I have a lot of trouble with things that don’t seem true to me,” Crichton says, his large, manicured hands gesturing to his graphs. “I’m very uncomfortable just accepting. There’s something in me that wants to pound the table and say, ‘That’s not true.’”

He spoke to few scientists about his questions, convinced that he could interpret the data himself. “If we put everything in the hands of experts and if we say that as intelligent outsider, we are not qualified to look over the shoulder of anybody, then we’re in some kind of really weird world,” he says.

Crichton, though, may have more experience than most in working with science. The 62-year-old writer grew up in Roslyn, Long Island. His father was a journalist and young Michael spent much of his childhood writing extra papers for teachers. In third grade, he wrote a nine-page play that his father typed for him using carbon paper so the other kids would know their parts. He was tall, gangly and awkward, and used writing as a way to escape; Mark Twain and Alfred Hitchcock were his role models.

Figuring he would not be able to make a living as writer, he decided to become a doctor. He studied anthropology at Harvard College, and later graduated from Harvard Medical School. During medical school, he cranked out books under pseudonyms. (One that

the tall author used was Jeffrey Hudson, a 17th-century dwarf in the court of King Charles II of England.) He had modest success with his writing and decided to pursue it.

Some books take a long time to write, such as “Disclosure,” which took five years. Others

spaghetti hanging out of your mouth at a restaurant.”

His HarperCollins editor, Marjorie Braman, says Crichton’s books are a joy to edit, even with the science tinge.

“He has a gift to translate science for the reader, and not only translate it but work

foundation for predictions that the planet’s climate will warm by 4 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century. World powers, he says, use global warming to keep citizens in a state of fear, just as they did with the Cold War. But Crichton is noticeably vague about who these powers are.

Yet many climate scientists have endorsed climate change predictions. Climate records continue to fall as many different regions experience warmer temperatures than they have in centuries. While it is always possible that the experts are wrong, that possibility diminishes with each passing year as evidence mounts for a connection between carbon dioxide emissions and climate warming.

Crichton considers himself an environmentalist, no matter what. “Why are we not feeding people in this world who are hungry? Why are we not giving clean water to the almost billion people who don’t have clean water? The greatest sources of environmental degradation is poverty. Why aren’t we cleaning up poverty?”

That’s a mystery for someone else to solve, he says; he’s just content having brought it to the masses.

Crichton expects critics will jump on him for his views on global warming and it won’t be the first time. In 1992, he was called a “racist” for

his novel, “Rising Sun,” which spotlighted U.S.-Japan relations amid fretfulness about the Japanese incursion into the American economy.

“The initial response from the (Japanese) establishment was, ‘You’re a racist,’” he recalls. “So then, because I’m always trying to deal with data, I went on a tour talking about it and gave a very careful argument, and their response came back, ‘Well you say that but we know you’re a racist.’”

But in the end, “State of Fear,” like “Rising Sun” and “Jurassic Park” and other Crichton works, are stories. Although the author says that inevitably someone will think the story true in a “War of the Worlds” sort of way. He’s seen it happen before.

“Somebody was going to pass a law preventing research leading to the creation of a dinosaur after ‘Jurassic Park,’” he says. “I was just holding my breath hoping it would happen, but I guess somebody finally whispered to him, ‘It’s a novel.’”



Author Michael Crichton poses at The Peninsula Hotel in New York, Dec. 7, 2004.

require less time, but Crichton has a pretty rigid writing schedule: He gets up early and writes from about 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. or so, taking a break for lunch. And, oddly, he’s never confident in his work.

Many of Crichton’s books have been made into movies, including “Rising Sun,” “Coma” and “Jurassic Park,” which was directed by Steven Spielberg. Crichton created the TV hospital series “ER” in 1994. Now in its 11th season, “ER” has won 21 Emmy Awards and the George Foster Peabody Award. He’s even had a dinosaur named for him, Crichton’s ankylosaur.

He is the kind of celebrity celebrities want to be: rich and famous and prolific but not too recognizable—although his staggering height does attract attention.

“Of course, the celebrity’s nice. But when I go do research it’s much more difficult now. The kind of freedom I had 10 years ago is gone,” he says. “You have to good table manners. You can’t have

it into the midst of an exciting novel,” said Braman, who has never before seen an author’s message like Crichton’s.

“I think it’s entirely appropriate because it is a novel of ideas,” she said. “Michael Crichton, because of his stature and fame for not only writing books, but TV and movies—well people do wonder what he thinks.”

Crichton’s books are a guaranteed sell, which is good news for independent book sellers such as Books & Books in Miami.

“I think when people are buying fiction, they’re buying authors who they can feel confident in the entertainment value of their work,” Mitchell Kaplan, owner of Books & Books, said. “With Michael Crichton, people have come to expect that. At the same time, they can learn about subjects they may not know a lot about.”

Crichton’s author’s statement is new even for Crichton. In it, he argues that a political agenda, not scientific evidence, is the

WALLACE

'Ocean's Twelve' bests 'Treasure' in debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Movie audiences have gone from one robbery flick to another. "Ocean's Twelve," the star-driven sequel to the theft caper "Ocean's Eleven," debuted with \$40.9 million, stealing the top box office slot from the heist hit "National Treasure," which slipped to third place with \$10 million, studio estimates showed Sunday.

"National Treasure," which held the No. 1 spot the three previous weekends, lifted its domestic total to \$124.2 million.

"Blade: Trinity," the third in Wesley Snipes' vampire series, opened at No. 2 with \$16.1 million. The franchise had lost much of its bite since "Blade II," which debuted with more than twice the revenue, \$32.5 million, and opened as the No. 1 movie in March 2002.

Playing in 3,290 theaters, "Ocean's Twelve" averaged a robust \$12,426 per cinema, compared with \$5,537 in 2,912 movie houses for "Blade: Trinity."

In limited release, Bill Murray's quirky oceanography tale "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou" opened strongly, taking in \$114,000 at just two theaters in New York City and Los Angeles. The film expands on Christmas Day.

Hollywood revenues rose solidly, with the top 12 movies taking in \$102.8 million, up 28 percent from the same weekend in 2003, when "Something's Gotta Give" opened as the No. 1 movie with \$16.1 million.

"Ocean's Twelve" reunites director Steven Soderbergh with a dream cast led by George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Julia Roberts and Andy Garcia. Joining them this time was Catherine Zeta-Jones, adding to the sequel's star power.



From left, cast members George Clooney, Elliott Gould, Brad Pitt, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and Matt Damon arrive for the premiere of "Ocean's Twelve," at the Grauman's Chinese Theatre in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2004.

1. "Ocean's Twelve," \$40.9 million.
2. "Blade: Trinity," \$16.1 million.
3. "National Treasure," \$10 million.
4. "The Polar Express," \$9.8 million.
5. "Christmas With the Kranks," \$7.6 million.
6. "The Incredibles," \$5.05 million.
7. "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie," \$4.4 million.
8. "Closer," \$3.75 million.
9. "Finding Neverland," \$1.7 million.
10. "Alexander," \$1.4 million.

"Movie-goers like their movie stars all in one place," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "It's like one-stop shopping for all the top stars in Hollywood."

The follow-up sends the gang to Europe, where they must pull off a virtually impossible heist to win a bet with a rival and pay off the Vegas casino owner they robbed in "Ocean's Eleven."

Given the movie's marquee-name roster and the success of the first movie, which grossed \$183.4 million domestically, some industry analysts thought "Ocean's Twelve" might do even better than it did.

Still, its debut came in higher than the \$38.1 million opening weekend of "Ocean's Eleven" in December 2001. Factoring in today's higher admission prices, "Ocean's Twelve" sold slightly

fewer tickets than the original.

Distributor Warner Bros. and producer Jerry Weintraub already are mulling a second "Ocean's" sequel, said Dan Fellman, the studio's head of distribution.

"Blade: Trinity" features Snipes returning as the half-human, half-vampire action hero, this time battling the lord of the bloodsuckers, Dracula.

Distributor New Line hopes "Blade: Trinity" will hold up well during an onslaught of comedies, dramas and family flicks through year's end.

"Everybody always wants their numbers to be better," said David Tuckerman, head of distribution for New Line. "Still, we're basically the only movie like it. There's nothing else like it in the marketplace, a sci-fi, horror type of movie."

L.A. critics name 'Sideways' best film

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Sideways" a quirky comedy about two friends on a road trip through California's wine country, was picked as 2004's best film by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, the group announced Saturday.

The movie won four other awards: best director for Alexander Payne; best supporting actor for Thomas Haden Church; best supporting actress for Virginia Madsen; and best screenplay, which was written by Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor.

Top acting honors went to Imelda Staunton of the abortion drama "Vera Drake" and Liam Neeson of the sex-researcher biopic "Kinsey."

"Sideways" co-star Paul Giamatti was runner-up for best actor. He also starred in "American Splendor," which was the critics association's choice for best movie last year.

The best film runner-up was "Million Dollar Baby," directed by Clint Eastwood, who also starred as a gym owner who

AFI names its top 10 movies of the year

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The superhero adventures "Spider-Man 2" and "The Incredibles" made the American Film Institute's list of 2004's top 10 movies.

Also on the list released Sunday were the not-yet-released Howard Hughes film biography "The Aviator" and boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby."

Rounding out the group's list, which did not rank the films, were the hit-man thriller "Collateral"; the quirky romances "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Sideways"; the football drama "Friday Night Lights"; the drug-smuggling drama "Maria Full of Grace"; and "Kinsey," a film biography of sexuality researcher Alfred Kinsey.

The institute's top 10 television programs of the year were HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Deadwood," "The Sopranos" and "Something the Lord Made," ABC's "Desperate Housewives" and "Lost," FX's "Nip/Tuck" and "The Shield," Fox's "Arrested Development" and Comedy Central's "South Park."

The lists were chosen by 13-member panels of filmmakers, critics, scholars and AFI board members. Top films and shows will be honored at an AFI luncheon Jan. 14.

trains a female boxer.

The best director runner-up was Martin Scorsese for "The Aviator."

The runner-up for best actress was Julie Delpy of "Before Sunset," a sequel to the 1995 cult hit "Before Sunrise."

Runners-ups for supporting ac-

tress and actor were Cate Blanchett of "The Aviator" and "Coffee & Cigarettes" and Morgan Freeman of "Million Dollar Baby."

The runner-up for best screenplay was "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" by Charlie Kaufman.

In-laws' six-week visit is too much togetherness

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Jay's," parents have informed us they are coming for Christmas and will be staying for six weeks. They need at least three weeks because they're having dental work done by another family member, and it must be staggered.

Long visits are acceptable in their culture, but it usually applies when people visit from another country—not another state.

The last time they came, they stayed three weeks. It was a stretch for me, but I bit my tongue. I work from home and was with them 24/7 because they don't like to drive. It's hard on me because they get bored and expect me to entertain them. Also, I don't get along well with my father-in-law, and neither of them likes my cooking.

Jay knows six weeks is long, but for him the time goes fast because he works long hours. Jay says he'll talk to his parents about this, but he's miserable at the prospect. Speaking up will cause problems for him, and they'll assume it came from me anyway. They'll be livid. Please tell me what to do. I'm on the verge of tears when I think about what's coming.

DREADING CHRISTMAS IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR DREADING: Be a gracious hostess for three weeks. After that, schedule a break. Go visit relatives or, if that's not feasible, check into a motel. You may find that having had a breather, you'll be in a better frame of mind to deal with the in-laws upon your return. You may also find that when the entire burden of entertaining his parents falls upon your husband, he'll encourage them to make shorter visits or other living arrangements in subsequent visits.

P.S. Since they don't like your cooking, have your mother-in-law do it. It will lighten the burden for you and give her something to do.

DEAR ABBY: I am 22, and recently moved here from a different state. Shortly after I arrived, I met an amazing man I'll call Lance. Lance and I met at work and fell for each other instantly.

After we had been dating only a month, I found out that I was pregnant with my ex-boyfriend's baby. Lance was confused when I told him, but after a few days of thinking about it, he told me that the pregnancy didn't change the way he felt about me. We have now been dating more than two months, and Lance continues to be wonderful and supportive.

I'm afraid that since I'm starting to show, Lance will get scared and break my heart. We have had a few serious talks because I feel he doesn't spend enough time with me. Lance contends that he spends more time with me than he does his friends or family. I am in love with him, but I'm afraid that what I originally thought we had together may be "too good to be true." Is this rational, or am I overly emotional because of my pregnancy?

CONFUSED IN COLORADO

DEAR CONFUSED: You could be hormonal—or simply extremely needy because you are vulnerable right now. Lance appears to be standing by you to the best of his ability—and now is not the time to be telling him he isn't measuring up to your standards of companionship. He deserves praise for his loyalty, not criticism for not giving "enough."

If you need more emotional support, I recommend you involve your family. Also, you didn't mention whether your ex-boyfriend knows about his impending fatherhood. Since child support will be partly his responsibility once the baby arrives, it may be time to share news of the blessed event with him.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes





TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS														
AMERICAN LEAGUE														
East Division														
	W	L	Pct.	GB										
New York	90	53	.629	-										
Boston	86	56	.606	31/2										
Baltimore	65	76	.461	24										
Tampa Bay	61	80	.433	28										
Toronto	59	84	.413	31										
Central Division														
Minnesota	82	60	.577	-										
Chicago	72	70	.507	10										
Cleveland	70	73	.490	121/2										
Detroit	64	77	.454	171/2										
Kansas City	51	91	.359	31										
West Division														
Oakland	83	59	.585	-										
Anaheim	81	61	.570	2										
Texas	78	64	.549	5										
Seattle	53	89	.373	30										
Yesterday's Games														
Minnesota 8, Detroit 5														
N.Y. Yankees 9, Baltimore 7														
Texas 7, Toronto 6														
Tampa Bay 7, Kansas City 2														
Seattle 2, Boston 0														
Anaheim 11, Chicago White Sox 0														
Oakland 1, Cleveland 0														
NATIONAL LEAGUE														
East Division														
Atlanta	84	58	.592	-										
Florida	74	65	.532	81/2										
Philadelphia	74	69	.517	101/2										
New York	61	81	.430	23										
Montreal	59	83	.415	25										
Central Division														
St. Louis	94	48	.662	-										
Chicago	76	64	.543	17										
Houston	78	66	.542	17										
Pittsburgh	66	77	.462	281/2										
Cincinnati	65	77	.458	29										
Milwaukee	62	79	.440	311/2										
West Division														
Los Angeles	83	59	.585	-										
San Francisco	79	65	.549	5										
San Diego	76	67	.531	71/2										
Colorado	62	80	.437	21										
Arizona	43	100	.301	401/2										
Yesterday's Games														
Atlanta 9, Montreal 8, 12 innings														
Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Mets 2														
Milwaukee 11, Cincinnati 0														
Florida 11, Chicago Cubs 1														
San Diego 15, Colorado 2														
St. Louis 7, Los Angeles 6														
San Francisco 5, Arizona 2														
Houston 5, Pittsburgh 4, 10 innings														
NFL STANDINGS														
AFC East					W	L	T	Pct.						
N.Y. Jets					1	0	0	1.000						
New England					1	0	0	1.000						
Buffalo					0	1	0	.000						
Miami					0	1	0	.000						
North														
Cleveland					1	0	0	1.000						
Pittsburgh					1	0	0	1.000						
Baltimore					0	1	0	.000						
Cincinnati					0	1	0	.000						
South														
Jacksonville					1	0	0	1.000						
Tennessee					1	0	0	1.000						
Houston					0	1	0	.000						
Indianapolis					0	1	0	.000						
West														
Denver					1	0	0	1.000						
San Diego					1	0	0	1.000						
Kansas City					0	1	0	.000						
Oakland					0	1	0	.000						
NFC East														
Philadelphia					1	0	0	1.000						
Washington					1	0	0	1.000						
Dallas					0	1	0	.000						
N.Y. Giants					0	1	0	.000						
North														
Detroit					1	0	0	1.000						
Minnesota					1	0	0	1.000						
Green Bay					0	0	0	.000						
Chicago					0	1	0	.000						
South														
Atlanta					1	0	0	1.000						
Carolina					0	0	0	.000						
New Orleans					0	1	0	.000						
Tampa Bay					0	1	0	.000						
West														
Seattle					1	0	0	1.000						
St. Louis					1	0	0	1.000						
Arizona					0	1	0	.000						
San Francisco					0	1	0	.000						
Yesterday's Games														
Detroit 20, Chicago 16														
N.Y. Jets 31, Cincinnati 24														
Pittsburgh 24, Oakland 21														
San Diego 27, Houston 20														
St. Louis 17, Arizona 10														
Washington 16, Tampa Bay 10														
Seattle 21, New Orleans 7														
Jacksonville 13, Buffalo 10														
Cleveland 20, Baltimore 3														
Atlanta 21, San Francisco 19														
Minnesota 35, Dallas 17														
Philadelphia 31, N.Y. Giants 17														
Denver 34, Kansas City 24														
BELL CANADIAN OPEN SCORES														
Final Round														
(x-Won on third playoff hole)														
x-Vijay Singh					68-66-72-69	275								
Mike Weir					68-65-70-72	275								
Joe Ogilvie					70-69-69-69	277								
Justin Rose					70-70-75-63	278								
Tom Lehman					74-70-70-64	278								
Hunter Mahan					72-69-69-68	278								
Stewart Cink					72-68-69-69	278								
Robert Dammron					72-71-70-66	279								
Mark Hensby					70-69-70-71	280								
Jesper Parnevik					69-66-71-74	280								
Billy Andrade					67-75-71-68	281								
David Sutherland					69-72-68-72	281								
D.J. Brigman					67-74-67-73	281								
Pat Perez					68-68-78-68	282								
David Brashaw					71-65-75-71	282								
Dean Wilson					71-70-69-72	282								
Steve Lowery					70-69-70-73	282								
Cliff Kresge					69-70-67-76	282								
Jose Coceres					72-70-74-67	283								
Arjun Atwal					71-67-75-70	283								
Kenny Perry					71-67-74-71	283								
Glen Day					70-69-70-74	283								
Bill Haas					71-71-67-74	283								
Casey Wittenberg					73-72-71-68	284								
Chris DiMarco					69-71-73-71	284								
Craig Perks					70-72-75-68	285								
Bob Tway					74-71-70-70	285								
Roland Thatcher					72-72-71-70	285								
Corey Pavin					73-70-72-70	285								
Bill Glasson					72-70-73-70	285								
Joey Sindelar					66-73-74-72	285								
Brett Quigley					69-71-73-72	285								
Chad Campbell					73-68-72-72	285								
David Peoples					69-70-73-73	285								
Craig Barlow					67-69-75-74	285								
Dudley Hart					72-73-73-68	286								
David Edwards					72-69-74-71	286								
Richard S. Johnson					73-70-71-72	286								
Roger Tambellini					71-71-69-75	286								
David Frost					73-71-71-72	287								
Jason Bohn					73-70-72-72	287								
Davis Love III					72-73-68-74	287								
Greg Chalmers					71-72-70-74	287								
Tommy Tolles					72-70-78-68	288								
Esteban Toledo					76-68-72-72	288								
Jonathan Byrd					72-70-69-77	288								
Jim Rutledge					74-71-75-69	289								
Mark Brooks					69-73-76-71	289								
Fred Funk					74-70-72-73	289								
Mark Wilson					74-70-71-74	289								
Tim Petrovic					72-70-73-74	289								
Steve Flesch					73-71-75-71	290								
David Duval					71-72-76-71	290								
Omar Uresti					74-70-74-72	290								
Todd Fischer					71-71-75-73	290								
Tag Ridings					68-76-72-74	290								
Phil Mickelson					75-69-79-68	291								
Jim McGovern					71-72-76-72	291								
Billy Mayfair					70-74-72-75	291								
Neal Lancaster					71-70-75-75	291								
Garrett Willis					71-74-75-72	292								
Tom Carter					72-71-76-73	292								
Dennis Paulson					69-72-75-76	292								
Brian Kortan					71-74-70-77	292								
Paul Azinger					72-68-74-78	292								
Aaron Barber					72-73-75-73	293								
Jim Carter					72-69-78-74	293								
Danny Briggs					76-73-77-74	293								
Justin Leonard					76-66-77-74	293								
Dicky Pride					72-72-77-73	294								
Grant Waite					75-70-73-76	294								
Larry Mize					76-68-74-76	294								
David Morland IV					70-73-73-78	294								
Dirk Ayers					72-71-79-73	295								
Kevin Sutherland					74-71-75-75	295								
John Rollins					74-71-74-76	295								
Andre Stolz					71-74-77-74	296								
Chris Couch					71-71-79-83	304								
SPORTS TRANSACTIONS														
MLB														
SEATTLE MARINERS-Called up LHP Randy Williams from Tacoma of the PCL.														
NEW YORK METS-Placed RHP Matt Ginter on the 60-day DL. Recalled OF Victor Diaz from Norfolk of the IL.														
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES-Activated RHP Kevin Millwood from the 15-day DL.														
NFL														
ATLANTA FALCONS-Waived S Etric Pruitt. Signed LB Terrence Melton from the practice squad.														
BUFFALO BILLS-Reached an injury settlement with QB Travis Brown.														
GREEN BAY PACKERS-Signed CB Al Harris to a five-year contract extension. Released TE Steve Bush.														
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS-Activated S Bob Sanders. Waived FB Cary Davis. Signed DT Jason Stewart to the practice squad.														
MIAMI DOLPHINS-Released RB Fred Russell from the practice squad. Signed RB Leonard Henry to the practice squad.														
MINNESOTA VIKINGS-Signed OT Mike Rosenthal to a six-year contract extension.														
OAKLAND RAIDERS-Activated CB Charles Woodson. Traded DT Chris Cooper to Dallas for future considerations.														
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS-Waived TE Kevin Ware. Signed FB Matt Stanley from the practice squad.														
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS-Activated OT Walter Jones. Signed WR Jerheme Urban to the practice squad. Waived G Jerry Wunsch.														
By The Associated Press														

Saipan Tribune

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